

Town of Westford

Representative Town Government Meeting Study Committee



*Westford 2000
A Peaceable Community*

Date: Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Millennium, Room 4

Attendees: Buffie Diercks (Member), Peter Hechenbleikner (Guest),
Ellen Harde (Guest), Kate Hollister (Guest),
George Murray (Chair), Tom O'Donnell (Guest),
Robert Phillips (Secretary), Bob Price (Member),
Donna VanderClock (Guest).

Discussions with Donna VanderClock and Peter Hechenbleikner

The committee conducted interviews with Donna VanderClock, Town Manager of Weston, and Peter Hechenbleikner, Town Manager of Reading. Weston has 7000 voters and an open town meeting. It suffers from poor town meeting attendance with a core of 200 – 300 regular participants. The town has little problem finding volunteers for its various boards and committees.

Reading has 16,000 voters and a representative town meeting with 192 members, twenty four from each of eight precincts, with eight of those being elected each year for a three year term. Attendance at town meeting is above 80%. Most precincts have no trouble attracting candidates for those positions.

Discussions with Tom O'Donnell, Kate Hollister and Ellen Harde

O'Donnell (a resident), Hollister (member of the Master Plan Committee) and Harde (Town Moderator) accepted the committee's general invitation to attend and discuss town meeting. Both O'Donnell and Hollister remarked at the low turnout at town meeting and suggested turning to representative town meeting as a solution. Harde wanted to recommend "All Those in Favor" by Susan Clark and Frank Bryan as a helpful and practical book on improving town meeting.

Future Meetings

The committee agreed to meet on Tuesday March 11th or Wednesday March 12th at 7 p.m. to develop an on-line survey. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 1 at 7 p.m. Murray to talk to Fleckner about Al Tosti of Arlington attending that meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the February, 2008 were approved unanimously on a motion by Price, seconded by Diercks.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by: R. Phillips (draft – March 5, 2008, approved – March 26, 2008)